

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE

SPECIAL ORDER NO. 43

October 14, 2003

SUBJECT: GROOMING STANDARDS FOR DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES

PURPOSE: Professionalism is the foundation and hallmark of the Los Angeles Police Department, and it is the major contributor to our worldwide reputation for excellence.

This Order restates the Department's existing personal appearance standards and strengthens some of those standards to ensure that Department employees present a professional appearance. It places accountability for compliance with those standards not only upon each employee, but also upon his/her supervisors and commanding officers.

PROCEDURE: Primary responsibility for complying with Department personal appearance standards rests with each Department employee. However, each commanding officer is also responsible for ensuring that employees within his/her command comply with these standards. Noncompliance with the Department's personal appearance standards may be misconduct, and commanding officers shall ensure that action is taken to correct the noncompliance.

I. HAIR STANDARDS.

A. General. All employees shall maintain their hair in a neat, clean, and well-groomed manner to reflect a professional and businesslike appearance. Unacceptable hair styles include, but are not limited to, a design(s) sculpted into the hair or wearing long hair over a shaved (to scalp) portion of the head. Dyeing or highlighting the hair is acceptable provided it is consistent with a natural hair color, without obvious blocks, patterns or spots of color.

Note: Color sheens and overdyes are not acceptable.

B. Uniformed Male Employees. Male employees shall maintain their hair properly trimmed and at least moderately tapered. The hair shall not extend below the top of the shirt collar, cover any portion of the ear, and shall not interfere with the employee's vision. Sworn male employees shall ensure that their hair does not interfere with the proper wearing of the uniform hat or the prompt and proper placement of protective head and/or face gear.

C. Uniformed Female Employees. Female employees shall arrange their hair so it does not extend below the bottom edge of the shirt collar. It shall not interfere with the employee's vision and shall not be arranged in a way that would be advantageous for a suspect to grab, such as in a ponytail. Sworn female employees shall ensure that their hair does not interfere with the proper wearing of the uniform hat or the prompt and proper placement of protective head and/or face gear.

D. Non-uniformed Sworn Employees. Non-uniformed sworn employees shall maintain their hair so it presents a professional and businesslike appearance.

E. Wigs and Hairpieces. Wigs and hairpieces may be worn. The wig or hairpiece and the employee's overall appearance must conform to the Department's general hair standards.

F. Hair Ornamentation.

Male Employees. Male employees shall not wear hair ornamentation.

Female Employees. Female employees in non-uniformed assignments may, to facilitate compliance with the Department's general hair standards, wear businesslike hair ornamentation. Female uniformed employees shall not wear hair ornamentation.

Hair Control Devices. Inconspicuous hair-control devices such as cloth-covered rubber bands (not to exceed one-quarter inch in diameter) and plain hairpins or clips may be used to comply with Department standards. Hair-control devices shall not interfere with the prompt and proper placement of protective head and/or face gear. Hair-control devices shall either be black or consistent with the employee's hair color and shall in no way detract from an employee's uniform appearance.

II. GROOMING STANDARDS - SWORN AND UNIFORMED CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES.

A. Sideburns. Sideburns shall not extend beyond a point even with the bottom of the earlobe and shall extend in a clean-shaven, horizontal line. The flare (terminal portion of the sideburn) shall not exceed the width of the main portion of the sideburn by more than one-

fourth of the unflared width. Sideburns shall be trimmed and neat in appearance.

B. Mustaches. Male employees may wear a short and neatly trimmed mustache of natural color. Mustaches shall not extend below the vermilion of the upper lip or below the corners of the mouth and may not extend to the side more than one-half inch beyond the corners of the mouth.

C. Beards. Employees shall be clean-shaven when reporting for duty. Beards shall be permitted only when required by the nature of the assignment or for a bona fide medical condition. To request a medical exemption to wear a beard, the employee shall provide his commanding officer with the following:

- * A doctor's note from the employee's personal physician stating the employee needs a medical exemption from shaving; and,
- * A completed Authorization for Release of Medical Information, Form OHSD MR 101.

The employee shall be available to be examined by the City of Los Angeles Personnel Department, Occupational Health Services Division (OHSD), as directed by Medical Liaison Section, Personnel Division to determine and approve of the exemption status.

The employee's commanding officer shall forward the doctor's note and the completed Authorization for Release of Medical Information via Intradepartmental Correspondence, Form 15.2, to the Commanding Officer, Personnel Division. Medical Liaison Section, Personnel Division, will contact OHSD regarding the request for a disability/medical accommodation.

Department employees who have received a medical exemption that precludes them from shaving, have been accommodated by the Department, and do not have any duty-related restrictions, may be used in a full-duty uniformed capacity. The employee's beard shall be neatly trimmed and not longer than one-quarter inch in length.

D. Fingernails - General. Employee fingernails shall be neat, clean, and shall not display decals or ornamentation. Fingernails shall not extend more than one-fourth inch beyond the tip of the finger. They shall not interfere with the employee's duty performance such as the safe drawing of the service

weapon and all other safety equipment.

Uniformed Female Employees. Uniformed female employees may only wear clear or neutral (beige or cream) nail polish (white nail tips are allowed).

Non-uniformed Female Employees. Non-uniformed female employees may only wear fingernail polish that is professional and businesslike in color.

Male Employees. Male employees may only wear clear fingernail polish.

E. Make-Up.

Female Employees. If make-up is worn, it shall be worn in moderation and shall be consistent with a professional and businesslike appearance.

Male Employees. Male employees may wear make-up to conceal skin imperfections. Make up shall be worn in moderation and shall be consistent with a professional and businesslike appearance.

Exception: If an employee's assignment temporarily requires the employee to deviate from these standards, the employee's commanding officer may grant an exemption verbally. This deviation should not exceed two working days. All other exemptions shall be submitted in writing, to the bureau commanding officer, explaining the purpose for the exemption, the degree to which the exemption is granted, and the expected duration of the exemption. The bureau commanding officer shall approve or deny all written requests for exemptions. The bureau commanding officer may approve an all-inclusive exemption for entities such as Area vice units. All commanding officers shall review all exemptions within their respective commands each January and rescind or extend the exemption in writing. Each command shall also maintain a file of exemptions entitled "Department Appearance Standards - Exemptions."

Note: Employees who are authorized to wear the uniform while working off-duty shall be held to the same standards as those working on duty.

AMENDMENTS: This Order amends Sections 3/605.20, 3/605.22, 3/605.24, 3/605.26, 3/605.30, 3/605.40 and adds Sections 3/605.25 and 3/605.45 to the Department Manual.

AUDIT RESPONSIBILITY: All bureau commanding officers and bureau equivalents shall monitor compliance with this directive in accordance with Department Manual Section 0/080.30.

WILLIAM J. BRATTON
Chief of Police

DISTRIBUTION "D"